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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DJIBOUTI 000708

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [KCRM](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [DJ](#)

SUBJECT: TIP ACTION PLAN: DJIBOUTI'S INITIAL RESPONSE

REF: SECSTATE 136521

Classified By: Ambassador Marguerita D. Ragsdale for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary: Ambassador and Pol/Econ presented the demarche and proposed action plan 25 July to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mahamoud Ali Youssouf, and Director of Bilateral Relations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as requested in reftel. Youssouf was defensive about the statement that Djibouti is not making sufficient efforts to combat trafficking. He presented Ambassador with much of the same information that has been included in Post's reports on trafficking in persons, with some additional points. Youssouf commented the Government currently has a public awareness campaign led by a prominent religious leader, Sheik Abdourahman Bashir, on TV and radio to dissuade Djiboutian women from prostitution for moral and health reasons. He also mentioned the fact that Djibouti has a very politically sensitive agreement with Ethiopia that provides for entry for Djiboutians into Ethiopia without visas, but requires visas for Ethiopians to visit Djibouti. He said this is one way that Djibouti tries to keep trafficking out of Djibouti. End Summary.

2. (C) In a meeting 25 July with Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mahamoud Ali Youssouf, and Director of Bilateral Relations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mohamed Ali Hassan, Ambassador discussed trafficking in persons and the proposed action plan for Djibouti. Ambassador explained that the Trafficking in Persons report for 2004-2005 was released in June and listed Djibouti as a Special Case. She continued that Djibouti was listed as such due to a lack of documentation to prove trafficking existed in Djibouti, but there was a strong suspicion that it was a problem. Ambassador explained the report is a tool to evaluate not whether a country has trafficking problems, but the efforts its government makes to prevent and prosecute trafficking. She explained the three tier rankings given to countries in the report and that Djibouti could in the next review be listed as a Tier 3 Country, if it did not move to comply with the standards of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA). She stated that if evidence is found to document trafficking cases, and Djibouti was placed on the Tier 3 list, it would make Djibouti ineligible for U.S. assistance that was not humanitarian in nature.

3. (C) Youssouf responded that prostitution begins because there is poverty. He agreed that it existed in Djibouti that could not be denied, noting his own experience witnessing such activity on a street near his residence during a pre-dawn morning. Youssouf held the position that Djibouti is making a good deal of effort to combat the issues in the report. He also noted that Djibouti is willing to provide all the documents to prove that Djibouti has these laws and has adhered to the international conventions relating to these issues. Specifically, he mentioned that Djibouti has laws forbidding prostitution and pimping, and a vice-squad - the Brigade des Meurs - to stop prostitutes from working. The government was working to prevent prostitution for health reasons, and caring for prostitutes with HIV/AIDS. He also stated the Ministry of Interior does not deliver residence permits to women working as prostitutes. In addition, residence permits are not given to children under the age of 18 unless sponsored by a business or family member with a justifiable reason for their visit. Youssouf continued saying that Djibouti has a very politically tenuous stand concerning documentation for entry of certain nationals into Djibouti. With respect to Ethiopia and Egypt, Djiboutians can enter both countries without a visa, but Ethiopians and Egyptians must have a visa to enter Djibouti. These are two nations most likely to be problematic for Djibouti in the transit area, according to Youssouf. He said this is one way that Djibouti is working against trafficking. He added that many of the prostitutes are Ethiopian who come for jobs. Since poverty causes them to prostitute themselves, it is very difficult to prevent prostitution.

4. (C) Youssouf also mentioned that Djibouti has an awareness campaign on television and radio led by Islamic Sheik Abdourahman Bashir to dissuade young Djiboutians from prostituting themselves in hopes of marrying a foreign soldier in order to leave Djibouti. He said that this campaign works against prostitution for moral and health reasons. Youssouf continued that Djibouti also was working to stop the large number of small boats that smuggle Ethiopians,

Somalis, and sometimes Djiboutians to Yemen. He said Djibouti has been strengthening its efforts in this area with the help of the French military as part of its efforts to counter terrorism, but also to stop trafficking. He felt these actions were a good effort against trafficking.

15. (C) Ambassador expressed appreciation for the efforts Djibouti is undertaking to combat trafficking. The U.S. had some additional recommendations concerning actions Djibouti might take in this effort. She went over each of the recommended measures provided in Reftel and passed to the Minister a non-paper of the points in French and in English, as well as a copy of the TVPA.

16. (C) Hassan observed there appeared to be a difference in meanings of the English term "trafficking" and the French term "trafic." He felt that this difference was key, because the type of exploitation meant by the English term did not appear to be present in Djibouti. Pol/Econ attempted to explain the different aspects included in the definition of trafficking used by the TIP report and how these presented concerns for Djibouti's situation. She stated that while prostitution was not in and of itself "trafficking," if a woman was forced into prostitution, entered into the trade willingly but was prevented from leaving the trade by a pimp or a brothel owner, or was held in country against her will that would constitute trafficking. Also, cases of child prostitutes were automatically considered trafficking, even if they had entered into it voluntarily. Ambassador noted that persons smuggled into a country and then forced to work under indentured servitude would also be examples of cases of trafficking. Ambassador suggested that Pol/Econ and Hassan meet to discuss the plan and Djibouti's situation in greater detail. This was agreed.

17. (C) Comment: While the actions Youssouf described may be indirect efforts to combat trafficking, they are only coincidental. In addition, there seemed to be a great deal of confusion on what trafficking is and is not, a prime example being the frequent return to fighting prostitution. Pol/Econ's side discussions should clarify the matter with Mohamed Ali Hassan. For the moment, the Government seems reluctant to accept that a true trafficking situation exists. End Comment.

RAGSDALE